PITTA

Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 21 Number 2 February 2024

HSBC Hyderabad Bird Race 2024: Sunday, 18th February 2024, 6.00AM to 5.00PM. Trip Coordinator(s): Sathwik Reddy (Mobile: 99858-07186)

The Bird Race is a day-long birding event that encourages birders, experienced or new, to go out and have fun birding at different venues around the city. More details on email.

FIELD TRIP: Sunday, 3rd March 2024, 6.15AM: Kistareddypet Lake, Hyderabad. Meeting Point(s): SVM Grand, Miyapur, 05:20AM; BHEL Bus Stop, Lingampally, 05:45AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Adnan Uddin (Mobile: 95337-01702)

Kistareddypet Lake, located near Patancheru, has recently caught the attention of birders. The lake is home to more than 110 species of birds, including large flocks of Little Stint, Black-winged Stilt, Black-tailed Godwit, Garganey, Gadwall etc. One can also spot Ruff, Spot-billed Pelican, Common Snipe, Greater Flamingo, Common Redshank, Temminck's Stint and other shore birds. The surrounding areas also host species like Mongolian Short-toed Lark, Citrine Wagtail, Baya Weaver, Indian Golden Oriole etc. This is a great opportunity to observe and record the diversity of migratory waterbirds and shore birds in this important habitat as winter draws to a close in the state.

This trip will be a half-day trip, so please carry breakfast and enough water to keep yourselves hydrated. Also carry protective gear if required. Covid protocols will be followed; please ensure you wear masks, carry a sanitiser and maintain social distancing. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. New Deccan Birders hats and caps will be available for purchase; please carry adequate cash.

BIRDING IN THE BEAUTIFUL MISHMI HILLS
Trip Report: April 17-23, 2023

Text & Photos: Aditya Rao

A view of Upper Mishmi Hills, showing the cloud forests and some landslides in the foreground

Mishmi Hills is a paradise for birdwatchers. The unique montane setup, weather and varying altitude makes the forests a magnet for birds. Both lower and upper Mishmi Hills offer great diversity and have varying migrants depending on the weather at the hills.

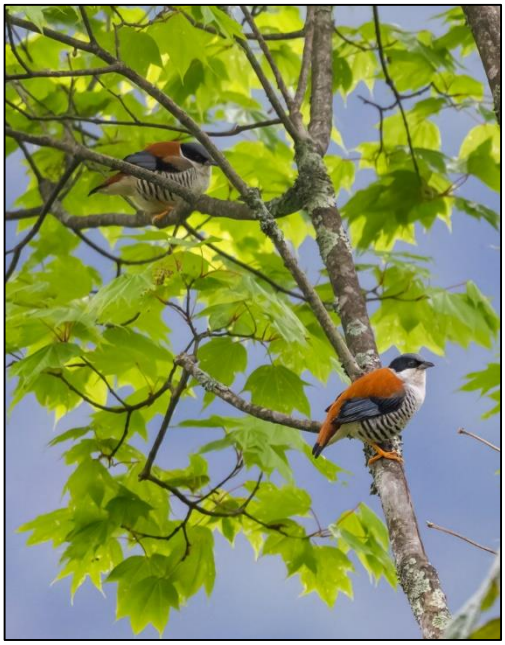
Long-tailed Broadbill

Silver-eared Mesia

Broad-billed Warbler

It is a massive rain catchment area and can rain unpredictably, but the months before the winter tourist season (there can be snow in early January) is best suited for birding; also late March to early May if you want to witness birds with colourful breeding plumages.

Streaked Spiderhunter



Himalayan Cutia

Grey-headed Parrotbill

The hills are the meeting point of the eastern Himalayas and Indo-Burma ranges. The rains and fertile soil make for extremely diverse fauna and flora. Mishmi Hills is estimated to harbor 100+ mammals, 700+ birds and many other creatures.

Mountain Bulbul

Rufous-winged Fulvetta

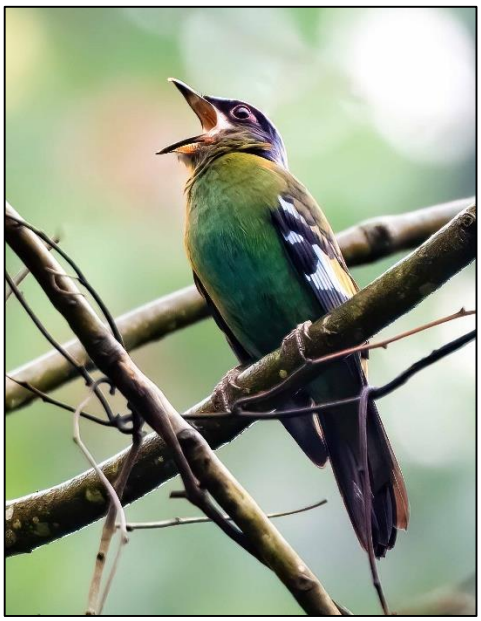
Black-headed Shrike-babbler

We undertook a 5-day trip in April 2023 to Mishmi Hills, and spent 2 nights at Upper Mishmi and couple of nights at Lower Mishmi Hills. During the trip, we got to see a great cross-section of the birds available there, ending the trip with 141 species.

Gold-naped Finch male

Streak-throated Barwing

Such a bird-rich area demands to be visited more often, and I am sure we will go back there again soon.



Green Cochoa

The full list of birds seen during the trip:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Golden-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon franklinii*	**46**	Large Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis magnirostris*
2	Rufous-bellied Niltava	*Niltava sundara*	**47**	Pale Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis unicolor*
3	Red-tailed Minla	*Minla ignotincta*	**48**	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
4	Nepal House Martin	*Delichon nipalense*	**49**	Chestnut-tailed Starling	*Sturnia malabarica*
5	Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	**50**	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	*Sitta cinnamoventris*
6	Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	**51**	Nepal Fulvetta	*Alcippe nipalensis*
7	Silver-eared Mesia	*Leiothrix argentauris*	**52**	Pale-billed Parrotbill	*Chleuasicus atrosuperciliaris*
8	Common Green Magpie	*Cissa chinensis*	**53**	Grey-headed Parrotbill	*Psittiparus gularis*
9	Greater Yellownape	*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*	**54**	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
10	White-breasted Parrotbill	*Psittiparus ruficeps*	**55**	Collared Treepie	*Dendrocitta frontalis*
11	Taiga Flycatcher	*Ficedula albicilla*	**56**	Grey Treepie	*Dendrocitta formosae*
12	Puff-throated Babbler	*Pellorneum ruficeps*	**57**	Blyth's Paradise-flycatcher	*Terpsiphone affinis*
13	Oriental Honey-buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*	**58**	Maroon Oriole	*Oriolus traillii*
14	Mountain Imperial Pigeon	*Ducula badia*	**59**	Lesser Yellownape	*Picus chlorolophus*
15	Hill Blue Flycatcher	*Cyornis whitei*	**60**	Bay Woodpecker	*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*
16	Lesser Shortwing	*Brachypteryx leucophris*	**61**	Little Bunting	*Emberiza pusilla*
17	Grey-sided Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus caerulatus*	**62**	Gold-naped Finch	*Pyrrhoplectes epauletta*
18	Tickell's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus affinis*	**63**	Grey Bushchat	*Saxicola ferreus*
19	Pygmy Cupwing	*Pnoepyga pusilla*	**64**	Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher	*Ficedula strophiata*
20	Ward's Trogon	*Harpactes wardi*	**65**	Small Niltava	*Niltava macgrigoriae*
21	Collared Owlet	*Taenioptynx brodiei*	**66**	Striated Laughingthrush	*Grammatoptila striata*
22	Crimson-browed Finch	*Carpodacus subhimachalus*	**67**	Rufous-winged Fulvetta	*Schoeniparus castaneceps*
23	Olive-backed Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*	**68**	Yellow-throated Fulvetta	*Schoeniparus cinereus*
24	Alpine Thrush	*Zoothera mollissima*	**69**	Long-tailed Broadbill	*Psarisomus dalhousiae*
25	Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron erythrocephalum*	**70**	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
26	Bar-winged Wren Babbler	*Spelaeornis troglodytoides*	**71**	Himalayan Cuckoo	*Cuculus saturatus*
27	Rufous-capped Babbler	*Cyanoderma ruficeps*	**72**	Dark-breasted Rosefinch	*Procarduelis nipalensis*
28	Golden-breasted Fulvetta	*Lioparus chrysotis*	**73**	Dark-rumped Rosefinch	*Carpodacus edwardsii*
29	Black-headed Shrike Babbler	*Pteruthius rufiventer*	**74**	Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	*Monticola rufiventris*
30	Crimson-breasted Woodpecker	*Dryobates cathpharius*	**75**	Blue-fronted Redstart	*Phoenicurus frontalis*
31	Himalayan Cutia	*Cutia nipalensis*	**76**	Gould's Shortwing	*Heteroxenicus stellatus*
32	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum ignipectus*	**77**	Blue-winged Minla	*Actinodura cyanouroptera*
33	White-tailed Robin	*Myiomela leucura*	**78**	Streak-throated Barwing	*Actinodura waldeni*
34	Green Cochoa	*Cochoa viridis*	**79**	Beautiful Sibia	*Heterophasia pulchella*
35	Buff-barred Warbler	*Phylloscopus pulcher*	**80**	Rufous-vented Yuhina	*Yuhina occipitalis*
36	Grey-chinned Minivet	*Pericrocotus solaris*	**81**	Stripe-throated Yuhina	*Yuhina gularis*
37	Rufous-bellied Eagle	*Lophotriorchis kienerii*	**82**	Streak-throated Fulvetta	*Fulvetta manipurensis*
38	Plain Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum minullum*	**83**	Brown-throated Fulvetta	*Fulvetta ludlowi*
39	Little Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula westermanni*	**84**	Broad-billed Warbler	*Tickellia hodgsoni*
40	Rufous-backed Sibia	*Leioptila annectens*	**85**	Chestnut-headed Tesia	*Cettia castaneocoronata*
41	Long-tailed Sibia	*Heterophasia picaoides*	**86**	Ashy-throated Warbler	*Phylloscopus maculipennis*
42	Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler	*Stachyris roberti*	**87**	Eurasian Jay	*Garrulus glandarius*
43	Mountain Bulbul	*Ixos mcclellandii*	**88**	Chestnut-tailed Minla	*Actinodura strigula*
44	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	*Hemipus picatus*	**89**	Black-throated Parrotbill	*Suthora nipalensis*
45	Blue Rock-Thrush	*Monticola solitarius*	**90**	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	*Urocissa flavirostris*

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
91	Green-tailed Sunbird	*Aethopyga nipalensis*	**117**	Grey-cheeked Warbler	*Phylloscopus poliogenys*
92	Black-throated Sunbird	*Aethopyga saturata*	**118**	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*
93	White-capped Redstart	*Phoenicurus leucocephalus*	**119**	White-throated Fantail	*Rhipidura albicollis*
94	Blue Whistling Thrush	*Myophonus caeruleus*	**120**	White-browed Shrike-babbler	*Pteruthius aeralatus*
95	Spotted Laughingthrush	*Ianthocincla ocellata*	**121**	Black-winged Cuckooshrike	*Lalage melaschistos*
96	Rusty-fronted Barwing	*Actinodura egertoni*	**122**	Red-headed Trogon	*Harpactes erythrocephalus*
97	Black-faced Laughingthrush	*Trochalopteron affine*	**123**	Large Hawk Cuckoo	*Hierococcyx sparverioides*
98	Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler	*Pomatorhinus superciliaris*	**124**	Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo	*Surniculus lugubris*
99	Mishmi Wren Babbler	*Spelaeornis badeigularis*	**125**	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*
100	Golden Babbler	*Cyanoderma chrysaeum*	**126**	Streaked Spiderhunter	*Arachnothera magna*
101	Whiskered Yuhina	*Yuhina flavicollis*	**127**	Blue-capped Rock Thrush	*Monticola cinclorhyncha*
102	Brownish-flanked Bush Warbler	*Horornis fortipes*	**128**	Verditer Flycatcher	*Eumyias thalassinus*
103	Mountain Tailorbird	*Phyllergates cucullatus*	**129**	Rufous-necked Laughingthrush	*Pterorhinus ruficollis*
104	Black-faced Warbler	*Abroscopus schisticeps*	**130**	Indian White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*
105	Blyth's Leaf Warbler	*Phylloscopus reguloides*	**131**	Black Bulbul	*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
106	Chestnut-crowned Warbler	*Phylloscopus castaniceps*	**132**	White-throated Bulbul	*Alophoixus flaveolus*
107	Striated Bulbul	*Pycnonotus striatus*	**133**	Red-whiskered Bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*
108	Black-throated Prinia	*Prinia atrogularis*	**134**	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
109	Yellow-cheeked Tit	*Machlolophus spilonotus*	**135**	Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*
110	Yellow-browed Tit	*Sylviparus modestus*	**136**	Scarlet Minivet	*Pericrocotus speciosus*
111	Great Barbet	*Psilopogon virens*	**137**	Short-billed Minivet	*Pericrocotus brevirostris*
112	Black Stork	*Ciconia nigra*	**138**	Blue-throated Barbet	*Psilopogon asiaticus*
113	Large Niltava	*Niltava grandis*	**139**	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*
114	White-gorgeted Flycatcher	*Anthipes monileger*	**140**	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
115	Striated Yuhina	*Staphida castaniceps*	**141**	Grey-breasted Prinia	*Prinia hodgsonii*
116	Grey-hooded Warbler	*Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*			

Some other photographs taken during the trip:

White-gorgeted Flycatcher

Lesser Adjutant

Chestnut-tailed Minla

Black-faced Warbler

Red-tailed Minla

Golden-throated Barbet

Striated Yuhina

Mountain Tailorbird

Black-throated Sunbird

Mishmi Wren Babbler

Chestnut-crowned Warbler

Large Niltava

Great Barbet

Golden Babbler pair

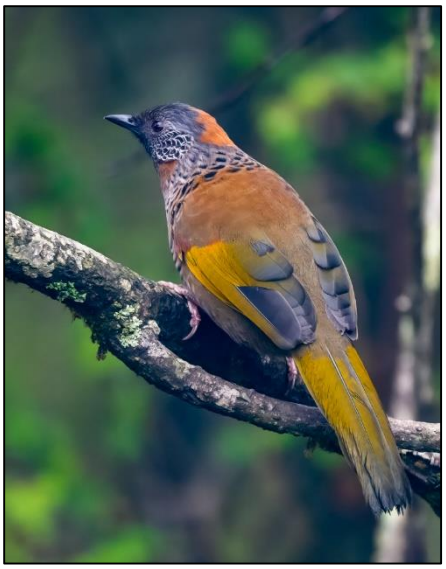
Brown-throated Fulvetta

Himalayan Cuckoo

Whiskered Yuhina

Lesser Yellownape

Maroon Oriole



Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush

Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler

Spotted Laughingthrush

Black-throated Parrotbill

Blyth's Leaf Warbler

Rufous-vented Yuhina

Yellow-browed Warbler

Gould's Shortwing

Small Niltava female

Small Niltava male

Ashy Drongo

Scarlet Minivet female

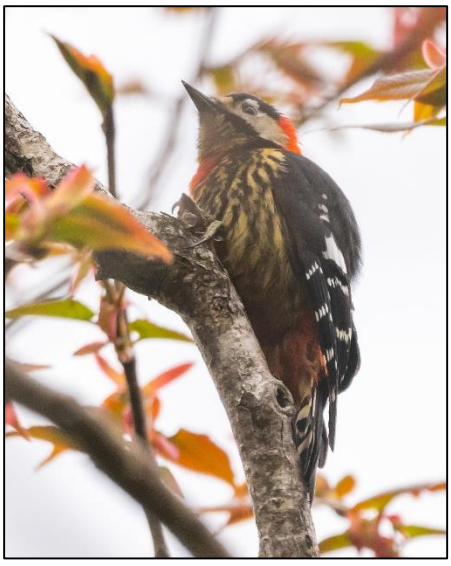
Grey-chinned Minivet female

Grey-chinned Minivet male

Olive-backed Pipit

Ward's Trogon female

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie



Crimson-breasted Woodpecker

Scarlet Minivet male

Ashy-crowned Warbler

Streak-throated Yuhina

Green-tailed Sunbird male

Striated Laughingthrush

Gold-naped Finch female

Grey-cheeked Warbler

Verditer Flycatcher

Striated Bulbul

Little Pied Flycatcher

Himalayan Cutia

Bar-winged Wren Babbler

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher

Dark-rumped Rosefinch

Black-faced Laughingthrush

Alpine Thrush

Yellow-throated Marten

White-capped Redstart

Pygmy Wren Babbler (aka Pygmy Cupwing)

Large Blue Flycatcher

Black-throated Prinia

Common (aka Eurasian) Cuckoo

Yellow-throated Fulvetta

Beautiful Sibia

Square-tailed Drongo Cuckoo

Blyth's Paradise-flycatcher

Pale Blue Flycatcher

Grey-breasted Prinia

Golden Babbler

Interesting-looking species of Fig found all across Mishmi, and probably a part of the diet of many birds and animals

Eurasian Jay

A small tribal home overlooking the massive and yet lush Mishmi forests across the hills extending up to the China border

Maya hotel on the edge near Mayodia Pass, popular stopover for many birders for *chai* and a quick snack

View of Sally Lake, a good spot for montane and plains birds

Snow-capped mountains as seen from the Coffee House

Coffee House, the only place you can stay overnight near Mayodia Pass

Flora and undergrowth is extremely busy, given the copious rainfall this place receives

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

Curlew Sandpiper

Non-breeding plumage (L) (Jamnagar, Gujarat, January 02, 2024) **Partial breeding plumage (R)** (Chennai, March 10, 2022)

Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae
Genus: *Calidris*
Species: *C. ferruginea*
Size: 18-23 cm

Description & distribution: The Curlew Sandpiper is a small wader that looks somewhat similar to the Dunlin, but it is slightly larger, and the downcurved, slender-tipped bill is longer, as are the legs and neck. Bill is black, sometimes with a brown or green tinge at the base, irises are brown, legs and feet are black and rump is white. In winter (non-breeding) plumage, it has pale grey upperparts with fine, dark mottling, white underparts with the breast showing a brown wash, and a marked white supercilium (another differentiating feature from the Dunlin). In flight, it can be separated from the Dunlin by its large white rump patch; while feeding, it also feeds in slightly deeper water than the Dunlin. In breeding season, the plumage undergoes a dramatic change, with the underparts becoming more markedly patterned with rusty red, with the upperparts turning a deeper brick-red. Juvenile birds have white underparts, grey and brown upperparts with scaly feather edgings, and a peach- or buff-coloured breast.

The Curlew Sandpiper breeds mainly in the Siberian Arctic region from the Yamal Peninsula to Kolyuchin Bay, Chokotka Peninisula and New Siberian Island. It is a passage migrant through Europe, north Africa, Kazakhstan, west and south-central Siberia, Ussuriland, China, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, west Melanesia, Wallacea and New Guinea. In winter (i.e. non-breeding) period, it is seen throughout Africa, south of southern Mauritania and Ethiopia, along the valley of the Nile River and in Madagascar. It is also seen in Asia, from the coastal Arabian Peninsula to Pakistan and India, through Indomalaya, South-East Asia and Indochina to south China and Australasia. It is a common winter visitor to the coastal regions of India, including Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and also Sri Lanka, and can also be seen inland when in passage during migration.

Habitat & behaviour: The Curlew Sandpiper is highly gregarious and usually seen in medium- to large-sized groups on mudflats, creeks, saltpans, non-tidal swamps and marshes, bays, inlets, lagoons etc, in mixed flocks along with other waders, especially Dunlins. While foraging, it makes quick darting runs as it grabs prey by sight from the receding waters of the sea or from inside the wet mud. Its diet consists primarily of aquatic invertebrates like worms, mollusks, crustaceans, gastropods, insects and seeds, and also sometimes shrimp, crabs and small fish. The contact call is a rippling *chirrip chirrip chirrip*.

Nesting: The Curlew Sandpiper breeds generally between June and August. During breeding season, the male performs an aerial courtship display. The nest is a cup at the edge of a marsh or pool, or on dry patches of tundra. The usual clutch consists of 3-4 eggs, buff or yellowish with dark brown blotches, which are incubated by the female alone, as males leave the breeding grounds soon after egg-laying. Parental care duties are handled mainly by the female till the chicks fledge, after which, like most sandpipers, the chicks forage and feed by themselves. Reproductive success of the Curlew Sandpiper seems to be directly related to the population of lemmings in the breeding grounds – in years when the lemming population is low, predators like Arctic foxes tend to hunt and pick up Arctic-breeding waders instead.

Local name: The Curlew Sandpiper is known as *'Mooku ullan'* in Tamil and *'Vankichanch'* or *'Shwethpith khichdiyo'* in Gujarati.

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